

2. SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

An understanding of local socioeconomic characteristics is essential to the comprehensive planning process. These characteristics help explain the nature of the Hallam community and begin to indicate prospects for future growth and development. This chapter reviews the local history, population and economic framework, and indicates important implications for the planning program.

COMMUNITY HISTORY

Hallam, originally a small farming community in the rich agricultural area of southwest Lancaster County, was platted and dedicated in 1892 and was incorporated as a village in 1901. The village grew east and west of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad, which provided rail service to Lincoln.

Local sources say that the name *Hallau* was suggested for the new village, after a small town in Switzerland, the home of a prominent early resident. However, as the name was recorded, the spelling was misinterpreted, and the village officially became *Hallam*.

The village's first buildings were constructed in 1893. The first residence, built by W. H. Talcott, still stands on Walnut Street, east of the Congregational Church. The first commercial structure--a combination drugstore and post office--was built on Main Street west of the tracks. Other early businesses included a general merchandising store, hardware store, two saloons, a small hotel, and various farm-related operations.

Many of the local community facilities and service systems date from these early years. Construction of the first school, fire station, and post office and organization of the Hallam Bank, Congregational Church, and Methodist Church all occurred around 1900. Soon after, mail routes to Lincoln were established, the first sidewalks installed, and telephone and electric service provided.

Although the village has changed during the past few decades, many of its functions and characteristics have remained constant. It is still

a strong family-oriented residential community. Its attractive rural countryside environment and "village" character have been maintained. In many ways, local residents perceive less attachment to Lincoln than do residents in most county villages, and they are developing a strong sense of community pride and identity. According to the recent *Community Attitude Survey*, most residents choose Hallam as their home because of its friendliness and peacefulness, its lack of traffic congestion and air pollution, and because they feel it is a better place in which to raise their children.

These are the characteristics which give Hallam its community identity. Although many are intangible and difficult to define, they are nonetheless quite important. As the village plans for future growth and development, it should build upon and enhance these special characteristics.

POPULATION

Population totals and characteristics provide basic yardsticks for comprehensive planning. They help determine space required for future land-use activities and capacity needed for future community facilities and services.

Current Population

As a growing farming community in the early part of the century, Hallam's population reached a high of 212 persons in the year 1920, then began to decline slowly to a low of 168 in 1940. However, since 1950, the village has again begun to grow, with 280 persons recorded in the 1970 census and approximately 285 persons estimated in 1975. Of the 1970 total, 59 persons or 21 percent were under the age of 10; 42 (15 percent) were between the ages of 10 and 19; 44 (15 percent) were between 20 and 34; 83 (29 percent) were between 35 and 64; and 57 (20 percent) were 65 years or older.

Local estimates indicate that 28 percent of the current populace has been in the village less than five years. This segment of the population has an average age of 23.6 years and a population-per-dwelling-unit of 3.94. These figures suggest that young families are moving into the village and could have significant implications for future population growth.

Future Population Growth

Hallam's future population growth will depend upon a variety of factors both internal to the community and within the larger regional context. Most indicate some growth potential. These include:

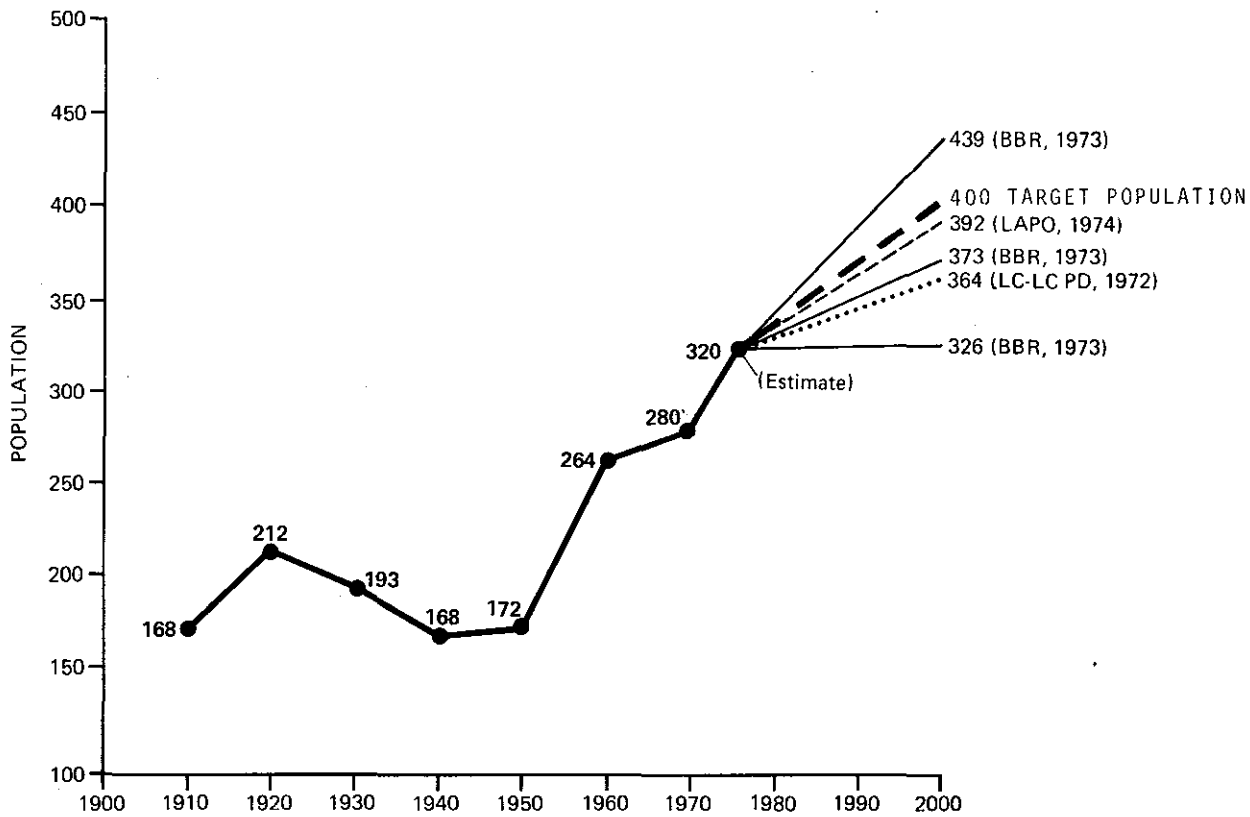
-- *Overall county growth policy*, which affects growth potentials within

the village itself. As a part of its regional planning study, Lancaster County has endorsed a policy of preserving agricultural and environmental qualities within the county. It forecasts major growth for the county over the next 25 years. While most of this will focus on Lincoln, growth policies do suggest that Hallam and other rural communities also will experience some future growth.

- *Growth trends outside the county*, which also affect growth potentials in the village. Although the population in Beatrice has been relatively stable, Crete has been growing in recent years. Future growth in either of these neighboring communities could influence new development in Hallam.
- *Attractiveness of the village as a place to live*, which could influence future decisions on housing location. Hallam is relatively close to the economic, employment, and service activities in Lincoln, Beatrice, and Crete, and its environmental amenities and human qualities could offer an attractive option to those desiring a small town, semi-rural living environment. However, several other incorporated villages with many of the same advantages have better access to Lincoln.
- *Local attitudes concerning future growth*, which determine how receptive the village will be to new development. Most Hallam residents favor some future growth, provided the community's traditional "village" characteristics can be maintained. A substantial majority of those responding to the recent *Community Attitude Survey* favored a total population of between 300 to 500 persons by the year 2000. Though this survey had limited response, significant attitude trends could be discerned.
- *Land suitability*, which determines the appropriateness of the village for new development. The recently adopted *Community Goals* call for new development in areas contiguous to existing development. Topography, soils, and land-use characteristics determine how suitable this land will be for new development. However, availability of these lands depends largely on individual landowner decisions.
- *The costs of public improvements to serve new development*, which influence the financial feasibility of future growth. New development will increase demands on water, sewer, and other utilities, and require extension of other community services. The costs of providing these support services suggest a *gradual* rate of future growth.

Population Projections

Several recent studies have included projections of future population for Hallam. These projections, coupled with the potential growth factors described above, provide the basis for establishing a target population for the village (see accompanying population graph).



Source: U.S. Census of Population 1910-1970

POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS VILLAGE OF HALLAM, NEBRASKA

- *The Bureau of Business Research* at the University of Nebraska, forecast population for Nebraska counties and incorporated communities on a statewide basis in 1973. Low, medium, and high figures were projected for Hallam, ranging from 326 to 439 persons for the year 2000.
- *The Lincoln City-Lancaster County Planning Department* forecast population for county communities in 1972. A year 2000 population of 364 persons was projected for Hallam.
- *The Planning Department* assisted by Barton-Aschman Associates, Inc. also prepared estimates on a countywide basis in 1974. Based on new overall county growth policies, a year 2000 population of 392 persons was estimated for Hallam.

Target Population

Based on the review of growth potentials within Hallam, it is recommended that a year 2000 target population of approximately 400 persons be used for comprehensive planning purposes.

The Comprehensive Plan should respond to the land-use, transportation, and community facility implications of this population, but it

should also be flexible enough to accommodate minor fluctuations, either above or below the target number.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Hallam functions as a part of the larger metropolitan economic system. It is strongly influenced by and integrated with the City of Lincoln, which provides the bulk of both employment opportunities and commercial services. The local economy is also influenced to some extent by Crete and Beatrice. Of the total number of residents who are currently employed, approximately 33 percent work in Lincoln, 33 percent in Hallam, 15 percent at Sheldon Plant, nine percent in Crete, and 10 percent in other locations. The village provides few jobs for persons living outside the community. The village's current size and growth potential indicate that the local economy will not function independently in the future.

However, although Lincoln will continue to be the economic focal point, Hallam should strive to maintain and supplement its local convenience commercial and service facilities. While the community has approximately 20 commercial and industrial establishments, it has lost valuable commercial facilities, with the lumber yard and gas station east of the railroad having closed in recent years.

In addition to providing needed services to local residents, commercial and industrial facilities make important contributions to the local tax base. Without these activities, municipal services must continue to be financed by residential property taxes and user fees, or by financial assistance obtained from state and federal agencies.

The *Community Attitude Survey* and the *Community Goals* indicate that most residents favor attracting new businesses. As the village continues to plan for its future, it should identify those convenience commercial services which are most needed by local residents. It should then consider possible strategies both for attracting new commercial and industrial development and for encouraging expansion of existing operations and market potentials. It should also carefully review federal and state financial assistance programs which may have potential for local application.